

**1. Requested Motion:**

**Meeting Date:October 17, 2011**

To endorse the vision for Mound House as presented by CELCAB  
(Cultural and Environmental Learning Center Advisory Board) and authorize implementation.

**Why the action is necessary:**

The future of the Mound House site and grounds is in need of clear direction and continuity. The endorsement of the vision statement by Town Council will assist in confirming both immediate and long term goals for the Mound House site and grounds.

**What the action accomplishes:**

**2. Agenda:**

☐ Consent  
☐ Administrative  
☒ Other

**3. Requirement/Purpose:**

☐ Resolution  
☐ Ordinance  
☒ Other

**4. Submitter of Information:**

☐ Council  
☒ Town Staff  
☐ Town Attorney

**5. Background:**

The attached vision statement was developed by the Town's Cultural and Environmental Learning Center Advisory Board (CELCAB) in February, 2011. It has been revised to reflect input received at a joint CELCAB/Town Council workshop on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011. Town Council directed CELCAB to make changes to the vision statement and bring forward for approval at the next Town Council meeting. Its purpose is to assist in visualizing both immediate and long term goals for the Mound House site and grounds.

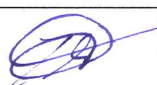
**6. Alternative Action:**

Determine the vision statement developed by CELCAB is not reflective of immediate or long term goals for Mound House site and grounds, and direct CELCAB and staff to determine a more appropriate vision for Mound House based upon Town Council recommendations.

**7. Management Recommendations:**

Endorse the Mound House vision as it is written and authorize implementation by CELCAB and staff.

**8. Recommended Approval:**

Town Manager	Town Attorney	Finance Director	Public Works Director	Community Development Director	Cultural Resources Director	Town Clerk
						

**9. Council Action:**

☐ Approved    ☐ Denied    ☐ Deferred    ☐ Other

*The following vision statement was developed by the Town's Advisory Board in February, 2011 and endorsed by the Town of Fort Myers Beach in (October, 2011). Its purpose is to assist in visualizing both immediate and long term goals for the Mound House site and grounds. The Town is working diligently to realize this vision to ensure all visitors will enjoy a full historic and cultural experience.*

## Vision

The historic Mound House museum complex is a southwest Florida cultural jewel, treasured as a unique ecotourism destination featuring 2,000 years of island life.

### The Visitor Experience

Approaching the Mound House entrance, visitors experience old Florida, delighting in the 2.8 acres of period landscaped bayfront property. As the oldest standing structure on Estero Island, the Mound House and grounds will be restored to its original 1921 grandeur using Florida's historic preservation standards. Meandering through the grounds on an ethno-botanical shell trail, visitors will learn about the tropical plants, trees and the orchard that flourished on this site during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Strategically placed educational signage will identify points of interest.

Upon entering the Mound House museum, the visitor will view an introductory video about the history of the Mound House and the Calusa Indians. To assist visitors on self-guided tours of the museum, interpretive exhibit displays and signage provide glimpses of life as it existed at the time of the various owners. From the second floor screened porch, visitors will enjoy the pristine view of the mound, mangroves and waterways from the highest elevation on the island, much as the ancient Calusa and earliest pioneers experienced. Interpretive signage will explain Florida's delicate ecosystem and conservation efforts. Volunteer-led group tours will be available on request.

Next on the tour is the Calusa "Stories Beneath our Feet" underground exhibit. This world-class archeological site offers visitors a rare walk inside a shell mound built by the Calusa Indians who inhabited this part of Florida 2,000 years ago. Once inside the darkened shell mound, visitors will view the video about its excavation which reveals the daily lives of these Indians, providing a greater understanding and appreciation of this ancient culture.

Visitors are invited to stroll along the grounds, view Matanzas Pass up close from the pier and visit the gift shop at their leisure during visiting hours.

### Education Programs and Tours

Mound House staff, interns and volunteers provide extensive on-site educational programs to children and youth such as school-led tours, workshops, summer day camps as well as off-site programming in the public schools. Adult educational activities include lectures, special events and kayak and boat tours designed to foster a greater understanding of southwest Florida's history and ecosystems.

### Community Resource

The centrally located Mound House is a source of great civic pride for all who live and work in the area. The Town of Fort Myers Beach owns and operates the Mound House and is committed to preserving and maintaining its historical integrity for generations to come.

As a signature cultural asset, island residents will delight in bringing friends and relatives of all ages to visit the Mound House; to tour the museum, attend educational lectures and social events. All are encouraged to pursue casual recreational activities, enjoy the shaded picnic areas or to simply relax amidst the quiet, serene beauty of this extraordinary park setting from sunrise to sunset. Kayaking enthusiasts will also appreciate convenient access to the Calusa Blueway Paddling Trail.

While limited parking is provided on the Mound House property, visitors are encouraged to use the trolley, boats and kayaks or bike or walk to access the site.

The Mound House is recognized as a significant archaeological and historic site by the State of Florida and potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Educational materials developed at the site have received a meritorious achievement award from the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation.